



# The Creative Woman

Quarterly



**WOMEN ACROSS CULTURES**  
A Symposium on Sex Roles and Communication  
WINTER 1979



CHIAO(Chinese)-The Dragon of the Marches-  
Good Fortune

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HEBE (Greek) - JUVENTAS (Roman)  
Goddess of Youth

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TO READERS: AN INTRODUCTION

Many people come to the women's movement out of disillusionment with the present division of sex roles in society. Yet many of the women, in essential agreement about what is wrong, disagree about the remedy for the perceived injustices.

Some women take on what some consider men's roles-- aggression, competitiveness, and assertiveness. Others would not play "the man's game," refusing to play by traditional rules. They would rather claim that to be female is to be emotional, intuitive, and nurturant, and that society has to treat women equally as they are. Still others would drop all mentions of sex roles and gender assignment and work toward some alternatives to traditional sex roles.

What course of action one may take should, ultimately, be a matter of individual choice. In this issue of The Creative Woman, I am presenting five articles dealing with women's sex roles, and the ways women deal with such roles through communication in five different cultures. The articles were originally presented at recent professional conferences, and the authors have kindly revised their original papers into a less technical style and format.

The first article, WOMEN SPEAK OUT IN PAPUA NEW GUINFA, offers useful comparative information on the emergence of a women's rights movement in that society. The historical, economic, and cultural factors that interfere with the movement are discussed.

The second article, WOMEN IN FAR EAST ASIA, illustrates major characteristics of women in three Asian countries--China, Japan, and Korea. Women's roles are described in relation to men's roles; the interaction of both sets of roles and communication patterns are presented in the context of the societal structure.

The third article, MALE/FEMALE COMMUNICATION IN THE UNITED STATES, reports up-to-date social science research dealing with the characteristics of communication behaviors of American men and women. The article discusses not only the societal norms and sex differences but also why such differences exist.

The fourth article, MALE/FEMALE COMMUNICATION IN WEST GERMANY, deals with the historical and cultural factors for communication behaviors of men and women in West Germany. The communication behaviors are discussed in terms of specific settings--such as during courtship, in the home, and between professional men and women.

The fifth article, AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN, points out the dynamics of social change and its impact on the lives of American Indians, particularly American Indian women. The article provides an analysis of the communication strategies and the dilemmas of American Indian women in coping with social change in the larger American society.

All these articles combine to illustrate the notion that communication between women and men within the same society may be a form of cross-cultural communication.

I sincerely hope that these articles will help the readers broaden their perspectives on women and reflect on their choices for future actions.

*by Young Y. Kim*



VICTORIA(Roman)-The Victory

Before joining University of Kansas, Dr. Asuncion-Lande had received her Ph.D. at Michigan State University and taught at Yale, SUNY-New Paltz, and U. of Hawaii. She is most active in professional associations of speech-communication. Currently she is preparing manuscripts for books dealing with communication, identity, and social-psychological integration of minority groups.



## WOMEN SPEAK OUT IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

by Nobleza C. Asuncion-Lande

The government of the newly independent country of Papua New Guinea, in its "Government Eight Point Improvement Plan" for national development, included a commitment for the "rapid increase in equal and active participation of women in all forms of economic and social activity."(1) This concern for women's participation in the development strategy of the government is a recognition that "women make a very important contribution to subsistence production, but have so far had little involvement in money raising activities."(2) It is also an official acknowledgement that "women represent only a very small minority of wage employees, and that this situation will continue while males outnumber females at all levels of the education system."(3)

Almost a decade has passed since the formulation of the "Government Eight Point Improvement Plan." Yet, very little progress appears to have taken place in the status of women in Papua New Guinea society vis a vis men in spite of the government's avowed commitment to this goal. Perhaps the nature of male/female communication should be explored to determine whether the patterns of communication in Papua New Guinean society have contributed to the subordinate status of women. Can such patterns be changed to facilitate women's active participation in the country's national development? There are new developments in women's organizational activities which are helping to channel women's energies toward implementation of the seventh point of the "Government Eight Point Improvement Plan", which refers to women.

### *Women's Role in TRaditional Cultures*

Although mainly traditional, Papua New Guinean society does not have a homogeneous culture. This is a developing country with a subsistence economy and a large army of unemployed. This country contains



many small isolated groups, each possessing a different social structure, a divergent pattern of organization, a distinct system of beliefs and practices, a separate language and a multifarious position in the national scale of development. Thus, generalizations about Papua New Guinean society are difficult. Nevertheless, while differences among the tribal groups appear to be overwhelming, some common features are discernible in male/female interactions. Striking characteristic patterns of male/female interactions can be observed in child rearing practices, initiation rites, and courtship and marriage customs.

In the traditional small societies of Papua New Guinea, male and female roles are strictly defined. The main roles of women are those of mother, wife and tender of the family plots. Men's primary roles are those of hunter, fighter and protector of the village. The division of labor effectively reflects these role prescriptions: men are expected to do most of the heavy and dangerous work; while the women do routine and daily tasks related to the normal existence and subsistence of the family. Infant care in much of Papua New Guinea society is left largely to the mother. There is a strong belief in many cultural groups, especially in the Highlands area, that contact with the blood shed in childbirth and thought to still cling to the newborn child from a few days to weeks, is potentially dangerous to masculinity. Also prevailing is a belief that it is degrading for men to carry babies or be soiled by them. On the other hand, women feel that men are not to be trusted to take proper care of infants.

Infants are usually treated in almost identical fashion regardless of sex. However, when children are about five years old, they begin to show an appreciation of role differentiation. (4) Girls are gradually introduced to household chores and garden work by helping their mothers, while the boys continue to play with other boys. By about the age of nine, girls are already established in "woman's work", while boys still may carry on playful activities till adolescence.

In the Highlands and the Sepik river areas, especially, women are believed to possess a supernatural power during their menstrual period and when giving birth, different from and opposed to the power that men acquire in performing their rituals. Thus, male/female relationships, especially in the Highlands are tinged with tension and hostility making communication difficult. In other regions these relationships are also fraught with strain, especially in the matrilineal societies where a husband may be at an economic disadvantage vis a vis his wife's kin. The more modern sectors of society reflect tension in male/female relationships with the difficulties that women have in communicating their aspirations and frustrations. In spite of Prime Minister Somare's statement that "...it was possible to make



men understand the problems and frustrations of womenfolk," (5) many of the best educated men find it hard to accept, or even listen to the women's demands for a change in status. This probably accounts for the rather low priority given by the government to the seventh point of the "Government Eight Point Improvement Plan".

Male initiation rites, from which women are banned emphasize the value of male superiority and the community of male interests. In some areas, the function of the ritual is to "cleanse the polluting effects of past feminine contact." (6) The women too, have initiation rites mostly connected with a girl's first menstrual period. It marks a new stage in her development- she is now fit to become a wife and mother. Essentially, it is a confirmation of her new status in the community. There have also been rituals in which males and females both participate. But while boys went through the full rites and were taught the significance and the secrets of the rituals, the girls were given a modified version and spared the physical ordeal. Subsequently, they could not act as initiators. Modernizing European influence, notably through religious missions and the colonial administrations have affected but not eliminated the practice of these rituals.

Despite the tensions marking male/female interactions, people do get married. They marry as in the world over for interpersonal attraction, sex, desire for children, economic advancement, power and alliances, and maturity status. But more compelling in Papua New Guinea is that "there is no recognized role for bachelors and spinsters...", it is inconceivable for anyone not to want to get married. (7) Courtship practices, marriage arrangements and patterns of marital relations are influenced by a number of factors correlated with certain cultural areas. In many costal and island regions courtship of young couples takes place in a setting where a good deal of pre-marital sex is allowed, or at least tolerated. In the Highlands, pre-marital sex tends to be frowned upon, an attitude derived from the notion of dangerous female impurity. (8)

Certain features however, appear to be common among the cultural areas. Most significant is the "bride price," or "bride wealth" and is defined as the reciprocal exchange of goods or cash by one kin group to another kin group. Its function is to restore the balance of exchange, with the gainers of brides compensating the losers of daughters in conformity with general principles of economic reciprocity. (9) The custom appears to be rooted in the cultural practice of establishing and maintaining social relationships by the exchange of essential and material goods. Commodities exchanged usually include the valuables of a particular community. The gifts are collected among the relatives as a way of showing solidarity

and cooperation. Thus, a traditional marriage arrangement involves not only the couple but their kinship groups as well. Everyone has a stake in the success of the marriage. The amount or quantity of payment is influenced by the desirability of the bride and the social status of the contracting parties. It is often a matter of pride to both sides that the highest possible price should be paid. This custom, steeped in tradition, persists to the present in spite of the efforts of Christian missions to eliminate it. And while such a custom remains, the marital relationship retains much of its traditional flavor, especially affecting the status of women.

### *Women and Education*

Papua New Guinean society is still largely preliterate. Less than 30 percent of its approximately two and one half million people were listed in 1971 as being literate. (10) Less than one third of the literate are women. Parents are reluctant to send their daughters to the schools, a factor that may account for this lower level of literacy among women. As already noted, girls begin at an early age helping their mothers with daily household tasks. Thus, while boys are free to attend school, girls must remain at home and work. Boys ages 6 to 10 are rarely forced to work. Even in the modernizing sectors, mothers still have misgivings about allowing their daughters to attend higher institutions of learning. They fear that as their daughters leave home and inevitably learn new ways, traditional customs will be forgotten leading to a culture clash between mothers and daughters. One of the many proposals strongly supported by the women at their national convention was "setting up committees in each district to educate parents to allow their daughters to go to school and continue advancing themselves at all levels." (11)

Nevertheless, some women have served as articulate champions of women's rights. A small number received their higher education abroad, sent there by the Australian authorities when no higher education was obtainable in Papua New Guinea. These women command attention because, in a country where there are a very few educated persons of either sex, their education gives them a claim to public attention despite their sex. This elite group of women is joined by an equally small number of relatively young women from the first classes of the Administrative College. This institution was established by Australian colonial authorities in 1964 when it became clear that the country would have to be given independence and that a national higher civil service should be created quickly. When Papua New Guineans took control of the country's government, these women had to be given positions of some importance in the public service. And a number of them subsequently were elected to parliament. They have become effective

spokeswomen since they are able to work within the power structure.

Outside this elite circle is another group: women with some education but without high positions. They speak out through the mass media, in particular by writing letters to the editor of the Post Courier, the only English language newspaper of nation-wide distribution, and to Wantok, the only nation-wide newspaper in Pidgin. It is quite clear that education has achieved the most significant change in the lives of women. As they become more educated, women are speaking out more aggressively about their determination to achieve equal participation in national development. They are not only writing letters to newspaper editors, but are also staging protest marches and demonstrations in order to be seen and to be heard as an organized force.

### *Communication*

The multiplicity of Papua New Guinea languages has contributed to communication difficulties which, from the start, have plagued women's efforts to unite for their common good. When the women are able to assemble as in the yearly national conventions of Papua New Guinea women, they must resort to an alien language, such as English at their first convention in 1975, and to a quasi lingua franca such as Pidgin at their second national convention in 1976. These two languages, the latter spoken by a relatively wide section of the urban population, the former spoken mainly by the educated elite, are not commonly understood by the mass of citizens in the villages. Thus the needs or the voices of most women, especially from the hinterlands, are not often heard. Also complicating the problem of unity is the presence of another quasi lingua franca, Motu, spoken largely by the Papuans. As personally observed during a recent field trip to Papua New Guinea, even if a Papuan is able to understand Pidgin, he/she may deny that fact. Thus linguistic loyalty (coupled with historical division of sectors) has been another impediment to the nationwide cooperation of women to advance common goals.

Papua New Guinean geography greatly affects patterns of communication between different localities. Mountains rise steeply, producing terrain extremely difficult to traverse, isolating groups from each other and breeding fear and distrust of strangers. This situation, as well as the linguistic fragmentation of the country have proved to be formidable barriers to human communication. No wonder that when the women are finally brought together through government sponsored village women's group meetings, some time is needed before barriers are lowered and real communication about common problems occurs.



### *New Developments*

The weight of tradition has slowed the advancement of women's status in Papua New Guinea, but has not completely stopped women from improving their condition.

The most dramatic development within the past two years concerning the women's movement has been at the village level, where traditionally women have little say even in the conduct of their own affairs. Village women's groups have been organized by the government to involve women in community development affairs. For the first time in their lives, women from different cultural groups have met to discover common problems and decide their priorities. (12) Village women's groups were created to foster better relationships among women, especially between the old traditionally-minded and the young modernizing women with some schooling; and to increase the women's participation in the development of their communities; and to encourage cooperative work in running their own affairs. The women's groups also serve as communication networks, disseminating information about new practices and new alternatives to traditional roles that can enrich the women themselves as well as their communities. They also serve as conduits of information between the office of the Prime Minister and the village.

Over 700 women's clubs are scattered throughout the country. (13) These clubs are administered by the Local Government Councils, under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Provincial Commissioner in each district. Through these clubs, women are becoming more aware of their responsibilities as citizens of their country. They are not only taking a larger part in decision making and in the planning of the development of their communities, but they are also telling the men what to do or say in such matters.

It seems clear that it is not part of Papua New Guinean tradition for women to speak out for equal rights. Their ability to do so now is largely the result of foreign influences, including the opportunities and encouragement received from their colonizers who still are present in large numbers in key positions and who still exercise considerable influence in the country. What will happen when foreigners cease to exercise influence remains an interesting question. But the future does not appear to be bleak. The present government is committed to improving the women's condition; more and more women are now receiving an education and are becoming more outspoken in their demands. This is likely to maintain the present momentum. The march of Papua New Guinea women toward progress will continue, and the gains already made are irreversible.



## NOTES/REFERENCES

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- (6) See Ryan, Encyclopedia....p. 556
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- (13) An interview by the author with the Advisor on Women's Affairs.
- (14) See Ryan, Peter, Encyclopedia....p. 7
- (15) See Ryan, Peter, Encyclopedia....p. 708-710

Another major reference for background information about the women's movement in Papua New Guinea and other areas of the South Pacific is Griffen, Vanessa, Women Speak Out: A report of the Pacific Women's Conference, 1975, Suva, Fiji: The Pacific Women's Conference, 1976.



Young Y. Kim is University Professor of Communication Science at the Governors State University. She finished her M.A. at the University of Hawaii; Ph.D. at Northwestern University. The main focus of her teaching and research is the process and effects of communication between people of different cultural backgrounds.

WOMEN IN FOR EAST ASIA:  
CULTURAL NORMS AND COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

*by Young Y. Kim*

Since the late 19th century and 20th century when China, Japan and Korea "opened the door" to the rest of the world, their traditional culture has gone through a series of changes and modifications. A flood of Western ideas and material objects entered into hitherto isolated countries; some were altered so fundamentally that older forms were discarded. This was especially true in technology, urbanization and industrialization. Yet the new influences did not affect all aspects of the societies equally. In many areas of life, "traditional" culture and "modern" culture are found to be flourishing side by side, while certain basic sanctions of family relationship, religious life, and status orientations have been altered very slightly. The centuries of influence of Buddhism and Confucianism on the three nations' fundamental social values and norms still persists in the heart of the culture. The adoption of Western liberal attitudes in individual rights and equality is minimal; the traditional authoritarian and hierarchical attitudes still dominate all major aspects of human relationships, including that of men and women.

As Herskovitz pointed out, "the behavior and belief of no two individuals is identical" and "whatever we characterize about one culture or cultural group should be thought as variables rather than rigidly structured."<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus, my attempt to present a profile of general cultural norms and communication patterns of the three groups of women inevitably sacrifices specific details and uniquenesses of individual groups. Further, many shades of variation among different regions and social groups within each society will not be explicitly discussed.

## *Femininity*

In a pictorial essay of Playboy Magazine (1968), "the girls of the Orient" were depicted as "fragile," "alluring," "warm," "sensual," "devoted," and "ivory-skinned" maidens "dedicated to serving man's slightest need." The same article also stated that "despite the rapid spread of Western attitudes, there is little evidence that the girls of New Asia will be any less intuitively attentive than their forebears." (2)

The stereotypical perception of the Asian women by the Western writer closely corresponds with the depiction of women by a Japanese poet Hagiwara (1886-1942):

With lips painted lightly pink  
And powder smelling white and cool  
about the neck hair.....  
Woman!  
Ah, with a sigh so scented,  
Don't gaze too closely into my eyes--  
Woman!  
You are sad,  
Because you can never do without them. (3)

The "ideal" feminine traits prescribed by the three Asian nations are clearly reflected in many popular stories and movies, "Chunhyangjon" (Chunhyang Tale), one of the most popular movies in Korea, is a story of a woman "Chunhyang" whose pure, delicate, and subtle beauty is widely praised by both men and women of all ages.

The external fragility and softness of the Asian women seem to be a consequence of their adaptation to the male-dominated society. According to an old Japanese proverb, for instance, the birth of three daughters could ruin any family's fortune; and until well into the twentieth century, surplus infants, especially female ones, were exposed to die. For centuries, women were considered to disturb the Spartan existence of the Samurai, the asceticism of the monks, and the discipline of the scholars. The general tendency to discredit women is deeply rooted in the teaching of Confucius; women were accounted to be subversive elements since they were difficult to govern:

The Master said, Women and people of low birth are very hard to deal with. If you are friendly with them, they get out of hand, and if you keep your distance, they resent it (The Analects, of Confucius, Book XVII, 25).

While the Asian women generally appear to be soft and fragile and thus accepting their subservient role in the society, there are other personality traits that are less visible and less widely known to Westerners. The traits include

extraordinary persistence, tolerance, and strong will power, as have been frequently manifested in numerous folklores and legends of the three countries. The heroine in "Chunhyangjon", for instance, resisted enormous temptations, threats and brutality of a powerful governor of her town in order to realize her faith and dream to reunite with her lover, Lee Doryong. It is not unusual to find today loyal daughters who sacrifice their own happiness by not marrying in order to support their younger brothers and sisters. Some even go into prostitution or other despised entertainment jobs with strong determination and devotion to their families.

Thus, the combination of external fragility and internal strength is considered to be the most desirable virtue of Asian women. Although seemingly contradictory, the two extreme qualities of the Asian women are internally consistent; they are both deeply rooted in the cultural conditioning over many centuries. Inferior from birth, totally subjugated and controlled by men, the Asian women learned to act submissive and docile, and at the same time, to be tolerant and persistent.

It seems that our psychological strength grows through hardships and that our coping ability becomes stronger when we accept a given condition as inevitable. Similarly, the Asian women cope with their life conditions with Buddhistic fatalism and unquestioning acceptance of "women's destiny."

### *Women in Family*

All the formal indicators in the three societies seem to point to the Confucian norm of complete male domination and confinement of women's value within the family. Traditionally, a typical woman's identity is secured through her relationship with men. She is her father's daughter, her husband's wife, and then her son's mother. From the early childhood, girls learn the inferior position of women by watching their own mothers' attitudes toward their husbands. In almost all aspects of the socialization process, discrimination and differentiation between sons and daughters are explicitly and implicitly present. Sons are regarded as far more important than daughters; sons inherit the lineage, prestige and fortunes of their families; sons are charged with the responsibility of conducting services in memory of their ancestors while girls are preparing the services; only sons could become officials or make a living for their family.

When a girl is getting married, her parents teach her to be absolutely submissive and loyal to her husband and parents-in-law as she has been to her own parents, and that, whatever difficulties she may face in her new family, she should tolerate them with patience. In other words, parents try to teach their daughter what are



considered most "proper" and "moral" conducts that all "good" women should follow after marriage.

Unlike in many Western cultures, the husband-wife relationship is subordinated and underplayed in comparison with other household ties. A man continues his primary allegiance to his parents and brothers, and the wife's loyalties are dispersed among parents-in-law, husband, and children. It is unseemly, bordering on indecent, for a husband to show affection for his wife publicly; to support her in a controversy or quarrel with his mother would be not only a display of bad manners, but an offence against a much more basic principle, filial piety. The strict and indisputable authority of mother-in-law over son's wife is typical of most households, and is referred to in many parables as in the case of the Korean wife who "kicks the dog in the belly in malice towards her mother-in-law."

Male heads of households are supposed to control the family finance, make all important decisions, and represent the family in all official contexts, except perhaps in children's schools. The system does permit a husband to mistreat his wife, or parents to exploit their daughters-in-law, without much fear of retaliatory actions. A double standard with regard to concubinage and adultery of men is still often accepted. Divorce is a shame and disgrace not only to the wife but to her family. Therefore, when a woman wishes to divorce, she does not think of the negative consequences in society upon herself, as much as of the shame and bad reputation on her family. Group consciousness and guilt over other members of her original family are so strongly built in the minds of the Asian women that, even today, there are very few divorce cases initiated by women.

### *Communication Patterns*

As mentioned earlier, the three nations have been influenced by their belief in Buddhism and Confucianism (along with other local philosophical systems such as Taoism in China and Shintoism in Japan). The Buddhistic view of life and the Confucian interpretation of social systems have influenced the communication patterns of women (as well as men) in Far East Asia.

In both Buddhism and Confucianism, words are considered limited in their power to convey true thoughts, ideas and feelings. In Buddhism, language is considered deceptive and misleading in the matter of understanding the truth; it is always a question of knowing and seeing, and not that of believing, which requires persuasive interpersonal and intrapersonal communication through words. Similarly, Confucianism cautions that one should not speak carelessly and speech should be at the right time and place:

The Master said, if a gentleman is frivolous,

he will lose the respect of his inferiors and lack firm ground upon which to build up his education (The Analects, of Confucius, Book I, 8).

Further, "Goodness" of human conduct itself was considered identical with cautious and responsible use of words:

Ssu-ma Niu asked about Goodness. The Master said, the Good (jen) man is chary (jen) of speech. Ssu-ma Nieu said, So that is what is meant by Goodness-- to be chary of speech? The Master said, Seeing that the doing of it is so difficult, how can one be otherwise than chary of talking about it? (Analects, Book XII,3).

Even silence was preferred to useless and improper words. The Buddha taught that if one cannot say something useful, one should keep "noble silence." The same attitude is expressed in the Analects:

The Master said, Hear much, but maintain silence as regards doubtful points and be cautious in speaking of the rest; then you will seldom get into trouble (Analects, Book II,18).

The teachings of the Buddha and Confucius are well reflected in old sayings of the three societies. For example, a Chinese parable says that "When a gentleman has spoken, a team of four horses cannot overtake his words." A similar parable is told in Korea: "A word of a gentleman weighs a thousand pounds of gold."

The cautious attitude toward use of words is manifested in the Asians' fondness for hesitance or ambiguities of expression. They hesitate or say something ambiguous (to the ears of Westerners) when they fear that what they have in mind might be disagreeable to others or offend their feelings, especially when they are superior in social status. Opinion formation is primarily the responsibility of those who are elderly or in a position of authority. Further, to the Asians, hesitancy or silence is preferred to eloquent verbalization even in expressing strong compliments or affection. Sometimes they are suspicious of the genuineness of the excessive praises or compliments. To them, truest feelings do not need to be, nor can be, verbalized. Cheng, a Chinese student in the United States, well describes the Asian attitude toward American verbal forms:

The American feels obligated to make some verbal comment to react to each situation. For example, when eating, one should say, "Oh, this is delicious!" or "My compliments to the chef," or "Where did you get this

marvelous recipe!" ....The Asian is unaccustomed to this kind of expression. His first reaction to it is that the American is a "big mouth" and the latter's friendship and interpersonal relationships are all equally superficial. (4)

The Asian expression, especially that of women, is much more subtle, covert, and less physical than that of American women in general. They have developed an extraordinary sensitivity in intuitive understanding of feelings of others as those feelings relate to themselves. This involves a nonverbal understanding of the entire social context within which each relationship is taking place, and an understanding of the way in which such relationships are expected to evolve. Such a communication pattern is beautifully depicted in the work of the Japanese Nobel-list, Yasunari Kawabata, Snow Country:

In Snow Country, the central character, Shimamura, has sought retreat from the pressures of life in a remote country inn, where he meets Komako, a prostitute. Even though Komako never declares her love to Shimamura, she doesn't have to.... In one scene, Komako, mumbling incomprehensible phrases about a party she has left, staggers drunkenly into Shimamura's room, gulps down some water, and staggers back to the party. To the Japanese, the scene is unforgettable, because Kawabata manages to make the reader sense that behind the curtain of Komako's incoherent mumbling lies feelings of a blazing, soul-consuming intensity. (5)

Further, the Asians' intimate awareness of the limitations of language make them place much importance on rigorous mannerism and etiquette of communication. The difference, in respect to communication attitudes between the Western cultures and the Far Eastern culture, is that Westerners learn them unconsciously; whereas with the Asians they are a subject of conscious interest and attention. A high standard is set; gentility implies a fastidious expertise in the niceties of bearing.

One of the basic principles which underlie communication rules and manners is the relative position of interactants in the hierarchical order of the society. When an Asian communicates with someone who is superior to himself, the commonest method of symbolizing his "smallness" as contrasted with the "greatness" of another person is to "shrink" oneself. They developed a wide range of bending and contractions, many of which were specifically taught in the Analects (especially Book X). The hierarchical status difference is well understood by Asians as to who should do the speaking, under what circumstances and in what manner.



It is, then, not difficult for one to understand the communication attitudes and behaviors of the Asian woman. When they communicate with their husbands, parents, parents-in-law, older brothers and sisters, or anyone who is expected to be higher in social status, they tend to manifest all of the verbal and nonverbal patterns of communication as discussed above. They hesitate to express themselves verbally as well as non-verbally, and speak humbly and modestly with appropriate manners. Their ability to suppress feelings of anger, sadness, bitterness, as well as joy and happiness, is considered to be indicative of moderation, propriety, and self-control, all of which are expected "virtues" of women. In addition, having to notice the slightest feelings of others and complexities of situations, they have developed a highly sensitive and intuitive system of interpersonal perception.

On the other hand, when the Asian women communicate with their children, younger members of their family, or anyone who is socially defined to be equal or lower in status than themselves, many of the manners and attitudes change accordingly. They are often assertive, articulate, dogmatic, and less hesitant in expressing their feelings. Also, the rigidity of communication norms become less visible and distinct as interpersonal relationships become more intimate and as communication situations become more private. In fact, many Asian wives do share lively and affectionate conversations with their husbands when they are by themselves; male superiority is asserted in proportion to the formality of the situation.

### *Conclusion*

An increasing number of women are sent to colleges and universities for higher education, and yet, they do not get as good an education as men, nor are they strongly motivated to do so. Most women go to women's colleges, "finishing schools for brides." The majority of women stay home after their formal education, and the small proportion of women who do go into society quit their jobs when they get married. The majority of women remain uninterested in or even aware of "women's rights" or possibilities of social accomplishment based on their talent.

Mass media in the three Asian societies reinforce the traditional male image of "ideal women" who are obedient to man and confined to home. Even some of the more "liberated" women's magazines today are more erotic and more concerned with consumption and urban style of life rather than dealing with women's fundamental problems. They continue with the same kind of complaining, confessions, and sentimental articles. The attitude is not helpful to women-- it is a kind of catharsis, since women want something to console them, to hear that other people are suffering from the same experiences.



In spite of the strong discrimination against women's participation in society, a small number of Asian women have made exceptions by becoming "women pioneers" in various professions. These women typically fall into one or more of the following categories; (1) those who completely give up their female identity by remaining single and by adopting many male characteristics, (2) those who possess exceptional talent or expertise that is far superior to male co-workers, (3) those whose husband and parents-in-law are exceptionally progressive and generous, and (4) those who manifest highly tactful communication skills not to offend the ego of their husband and male co-workers.

The rigid cultural norms and sanctioning of male superiority may have contributed to the stability of the family and social systems of the three Asian nations. The selfless devotion and love many Asian women have demonstrated for their families throughout their lives can be viewed as one of the most beautiful and noble qualities of human life. And yet, there is an important contrast between the forms of etiquette, manner, or social discrimination on the one hand, and actual human nature on the other. Women in Asian cultures share all of the basic human feelings and needs with men. The difference is that men are allowed to express their thoughts and feelings freely to women, while women cannot easily reciprocate their own to their counterparts without risking some degree of psychological and social safety. The frequent repression and vulnerability of Asian women, instead, is expressed in their chronic feeling of sadness, unhappiness and self-denial (although they may not express these feelings publicly).



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MALE/FEMALE COMMUNICATION IN THE UNITED STATES  
by Gail M. St. Martin

It is a truism that women are the talkers in contrast to men who are the strong and silent listeners. Not true. "In study after study men have been found to speak more often and at greater length than women," says Nancy Henley in her illuminating book, Body Politics; Power, Sex and Nonverbal Communication. In an earlier book which Henley coauthored with Barrie Thorne a study was reported in which subjects were given as much time as they liked to describe stimulus drawings and the resulting mean times were; for females, 3.17 minutes; for males, 13.0 minutes! Not only do males talk more in all types of groups, they also interrupt other speakers more than women do. Male-female conversation is a very asymmetrical arrangement. And to perpetuate this pattern the New Seventeen Book of Etiquette, as recently as 1972, admonished young ladies that they were not supposed to talk as much as men do.

Men and women speak in different quantities and also use different words. Thorne and Henley state that in English sex differences in usage are "preferential," that is, they're a matter of frequency of occurrence. Cursing is a good example of this--women do--but men do so more. Another example; women are more precise in their pronunciation. A woman will end a gerund with "-ing." while a man is often satisfied with "-in." In her Male/Female Language, Mary Ritchie Key suggests that, "Apparently females attempt some kind of equilibrium by reaching a higher status in language to compensate for their low status as members of society."

Still dealing with vocabulary, women use more tag questions than men do. "It's a beautiful day, isn't it?"; more "empty" adjectives, "divine dinner," "charming dress"; and both "so" and "such" as adverbial intensifiers, "so pretty, such a nice party."



Male and female vocal intonation patterns differ too. Males rarely use the highest level of pitch, giving them three contrastive levels to the usual female four in English. This was shockingly illustrated to me one day when a young Latin American male student who spoke little English left my classroom saying, "Bye-bye." with 4-2 intonation. The effect was startlingly "effeminate." We spent part of the next class talking about intonation patterns and since then I've been using a more neutral form of farewell, especially with beginning students.

Intonation pattern is not, as might be supposed, a matter of physical maturity occurring after a teenager's voice "changes". In a very interesting study reported in Thorne and Henley's book the researcher was able to demonstrate that even before puberty male and female voices speaking sentences can accurately be identified according to sex. This would seem to suggest that we learn gender-specific types of vocal intonation during childhood. It has been reported often that, contrary to popular belief, males display more gestures than do females regardless of sex of the conversation partner. An analysis of 10,000 magazine photographs revealed that males are five times more likely to perform an embrace than is a woman. Further, another study showed that without regard to gender, touch exchange is highest for lower status target, next highest for peers and least for persons of higher status, that is, men touch women more than vice-versa and men touch lower status individuals more than same and higher status ones.

One sort of nonverbal behavior is more common among women than men--preening, for example, hair stroking and clothes arranging. Among female college students this sort of behavior is most pronounced during conversation with a male partner. Other characteristic female conversational positions are: sitting with hands in lap; crossing legs at the ankle; crossing legs at the knee. Strictly male gestures are: cracking knuckles; sitting with both feet on floor ankles apart; crossing legs ankle to knee; stretching out legs with ankles crossed. You need only to try on the "characteristic gestures" of the opposite sex and have them feel somehow rather "wrong" to recognize how very conditioned we are with regard to gender-specific gestures.

Space use for females is less and less desirable than for males. This principle and other relationships are profusely illustrated by Goffman in his publication, Gender Advertisements. What is true for space is also true for time--the more powerful person in an encounter will control the length of time and its use, Henley contends. Being obliged to wait at the dentist's or doctor's is an example. And in my experience, the doctor in whose



office I can plan to sit the longest is the gynecologist's. His clientele is doubly powerless-- patients and females.

Why sex differences in the sending of nonverbal messages exist is a matter of speculation. In his classic, Kinesics in Context, Birdwhistle suggests that it is because men and women are so much alike physically that humans need to assume behaviors that will distinguish between the sexes. Henley contends that differential behavior is a matter of power and status and that the behaviors expressing dominance and subordination between nonequals regardless of sex parallel those used between dominant males and subordinate females. Concerning the ability to perceive nonverbal messages there is conflicting evidence. Most researchers find that females are more sensitive. Perhaps they develop the greater sensitivity in response to a need to read and read appropriately the messages from those generally more in control.

Attitudes toward the gender of the person communicating can significantly affect perception of the message. Different groups of college students were exposed to written articles, some being told that the authors were male, others being told that the authors were female. Both male and female readers rated the articles lower when they believed that the authors were female. Being male seems to make one somehow more credible.

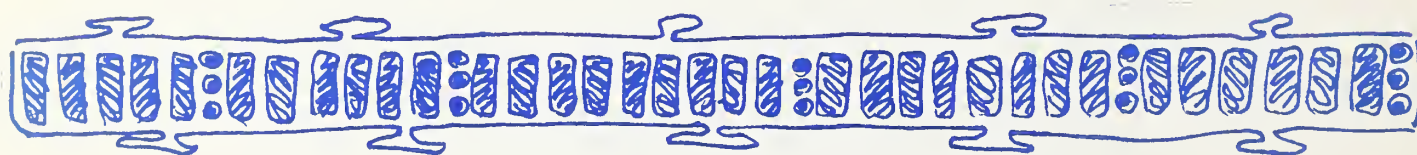
It would seem that professionals whose primary concern is psychology would be free of gender stereotypes. They are not. Writing in the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, Broverman reported that, "The clinicians' concepts of a healthy mature man do not differ from their concepts of a healthy mature adult. However... clinicians' concepts of a mature healthy woman do differ significantly from their adult health concepts." The implications of this finding for the quality of mental health care available for women are dismaying!

Looking at other aspects of American society, we see that the lone business women in otherwise all male peer groups often become deviants, isolates or low status members of their groups. This happens because of a special all-male peer group dynamic, found in neighborhood bars and playing fields which carries over into adult business work situations. Women in the United States, until very recently, did not have this kind of opportunity for leisure play. In their best-seller, The Organizational Woman, Jardim and Hennig recognize this same factor and claim that because of the usual male team experience, males differ from females in aggression, self-confidence, planning, risk-taking and strategy. Women might, of course, attempt to operate as men, with competitive and at the same time team spirit, however, it seems that throughout history society has viewed femininity and achievement as incompatible goals.

A 1971 Modern Language Association survey of 418 colleges and universities revealed that women make up 47% of the instructors, but only 7% of the full professors. In an interview with one of these female full professors I listened as she expressed the opinion that academia was still to a large extent, "a man's world," much as it was when she entered it in 1941. Her index was the male-dominated editorships of learned journals. She told of a year long battle to have the women Ph.D.s in her department addressed as "Dr." as were their male colleagues. Paradoxically, she felt that she was treated as an equal within her department.

Responding to the increased awareness of male and female roles within the last decade, there can be little doubt that women are rethinking their roles in the family and society. But the noted psychologist Eric Erikson suggests that some men may not be as open to role redefinition. He says, "No doubt there exists among men an honest sense of wishing to save at whatever cost a sexual polarity...which they fear may be lost in too much sameness, equality..or at any rate in too much self-conscious talk."

Iris Murdock expresses her opinion in The Black Prince when she writes, "Of course men play roles, but women play roles too, blanker ones. They have in the play of life, fewer good lines." Women in the United States seem to be awakened to the situation Murdock alludes to. At this time, however, they can do little more than try to reinterpret their given roles. It will be only as women may gain more power in society that they will be able to participate in the conception and scripting of their lives.



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MALE/FEMALE COMMUNICATION IN WEST GERMANY  
*by Erika Vora*

We're all born equal. However, are men supposed to be more equal than women? No matter how the laws try to artificially equalize the sexes, have the basic values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of men toward women really changed toward equality? Of special concern are patterns of interaction between men and women during maturity, specifically during courtship, in the home after marriage, and in professional activities.

People in West Germany are especially interesting for the study of male/female communication patterns. As one of the most developed and dynamic nations in the world Germany is typical of many western countries. But Germany also has the Prussian heritage of women being subservient to men. This paternalistic tradition is reflected by Germans referring to their country as their Vaterland (fatherland) rather than motherland.

In 1870, the Bavarian statute book revealed: By marriage, the wife comes under the authority of her husband and the law (Gewalt) allows him to chastise her moderately. Women, with the exception of the mother and grandmother, are unfit to be guardians, as are minors, lunatics, and spend-thrifts. The laws of Prussia stated: "Children may not marry without the consent of the father." The mother was of no account in giving up her daughter. By marriage, the husband also obtained control of the wife's fortune so that whatever she earned before or during her marriage belonged to her husband. He had the right to squander all of it, but she might not spend a penny of what once was her own! Should she wish to divorce: Bodily ill treatment may be cause for divorce if it endangers the health or life of the wife. (1) These laws reflect the strength of convictions and common laws imbedded in the German society at that time affirming the



superiority of the male and, therefore, extraordinary rights for the male compared to those for the female. The Prussian heritage gave a man authority and influence over women in all phases of life including courtship, the home, and professional activities.

Belief in the superiority of the German man over the German woman persists even today. In a recent national study, 400 German men responded to a series of questions asking what they thought about themselves, their mates, women in general, career and family, as well as equal rights for women and men. The sample represented a cross section of West German working men between twenty and fifty years of age. A major finding of this study was that the German man wants to give orders; he wants to be in charge; he wants to be the boss in his interactions with a woman. Male/female communications in West Germany are greatly affected by the perception and belief of the man that he is indeed superior to women.(2)

### *Communication During Courtship*

The German man wants to be the leader and initiator when courting a woman. In an interview of ten men and ten women in West Germany, subjects were asked about their preferences in initiating romantic communications. All the men preferred to approach the woman (rather than vice versa), ask her for a date, drive the car, order the wine, and pay the bill at a restaurant. They also expected to be the first in initiating a kiss. The women agreed that generally they let a man take the first step in romantic encounters.

The German male communicates his affection not only verbally, but also nonverbally by surprising his lady with flowers, wine, or other small gifts to remind her of him, or bring her pleasure. The woman shows her appreciation and affection nonverbally by dressing specially for her date, looking her best and wearing his gifts. Verbally, she might compliment him on his thoughtfulness or good taste. On a date, the man usually showers his lady with compliments and centers his attention on her. He seeks to make his date feel special, and she reciprocates.

The characteristics sought in a mate by German men and women suggest the desire for male superiority. A study of 230 German men indicated that four out of five explicitly or implicitly desired younger mates; two out of three desired shorter women, while one in five desired a loving and affectionate mate. (3)

In the personal interviews, all ten men were appalled by an aggressive woman who would ("God forbid") initiate love making. When asked to name an

undesirable characteristic of a woman in courtship, aggression was the most dominant. The men expressed the desire and need to conquer. Once again, women agreed that usually they let the man take the aggressive role. Males preferred mates with less general intelligence, education, and a lower social status than their own. The beliefs, values, attitudes, and perceptions expressed by both sexes agreed upon these differences. Women wanted mates to whom they could look up, with more education and possibly more intelligence. Such differences led their male/female communications to be mostly one way (from man to woman), authoritarian and limiting in scope. The man would usually make decisions and then tell his mate. He limited communications by not discussing certain events of his life which he considered below her intelligence or to be kept from her for her own protection.

### *Communication in the Home*

The German man is the boss at home. He has no wish for a "real" partner. He likes to control the flow of communication within his home. The national survey indicated that a husband in Germany expects his wife to distract him from his tensions as soon as he comes home from a day's work. Any complaints she might have about the children, rising prices, or any unpleasant topic, should wait until later in the evening when Vater (father) is ready.

Men do not discuss their jobs with their wives. "My wife does not know about my professional life. She knows the people I work with, but she does not know the problems that arise in the office; and she does not need to know these anyway. There is no need to bother her with that" is the generally accepted view among German men. "A 'real' woman wants very much to have a boss in the house, a man who can make decisions." "I would be terribly embarrassed to ask my wife for money." "In some areas in marriage, it is most important that the man sets the rules, simply because women - if you excuse me- think somehow illogically." "Whenever I think of women's liberation, I can only smile. Every woman wants to have a man. A woman can only feel fulfilled at the side of a man." "At home, I confess, I am the boss." (4)

### *Communication Between Professional Men and Women*

The German man generally believes that he has not only stronger nerves and muscles, but that he is also intellectually and emotionally superior. Only one percent of the German men in the national survey would welcome a female boss. Many positions are not open to women, as specifically stated in the following responses to female applicants: "I am sure you will understand that the physical and psychological stress in selling our goods is too high for a woman." "As you can see from our

advertisement, we are looking for a male co-worker to fill this position." (5)

One problem discussed by the German women interviewed was the difficulty the professional woman encounters when looking for a job in Germany compared to her male counterpart. It is like "shadow boxing with male competition." Even though careers seem to be available to both sexes in various areas, there are distinct limitations for advancement of women beyond the first rung of the ladder. Dealing with men professionally on an equal basis is not an easy task for a German woman, since she is often confronting resentment or a preconceived notion that she might not be able to perform as well as a man.

Aggressiveness, even for a woman in the professions, is not considered a positive trait in Germany. Among the women interviewed, one female professor and one lawyer confessed that they often tried very hard not to appear to be too dominant in a predominantly male group discussion. This meant they kept fairly quiet, listened to the men and handled their disagreements very carefully.

Four out of five female professionals interviewed revealed that they felt in a bind in terms of not ever quite knowing how they should act with their male colleagues. Feminine dress and a warm and friendly manner were often misunderstood. Some had resorted to wearing tailored clothes to down-play femininity and appear more professional. In doing so, they were either regarded as "manly," or they attracted those men intrigued by aloofness in women. All twenty male and female interviewees agreed that the German man still looks at women primarily as sex symbols. Here lie the major obstacles for professional women in Germany. Cultural conditioning and sexual attraction make the man look at his female colleague as a woman first, and then as a professional. This creates communication barriers making it difficult to ideally relate to one another, or be professional equals. For the German man, the professional woman is a relatively new phenomenon. He perceives her as invading a world in which he has traditionally been the ruler. And women too, have always seen men as the professionals.

In a society where the woman's role is faithful helper to her husband, it is most difficult for a man to be introduced as, "the husband of Mrs. Jones!" He definitely needs a strong self-concept to stand in a society constantly looking for any sign that the husband of a successful career woman is dass er unter dem Pantoffel steht (that he is "hen-pecked"). A true partnership, where both man and woman grow to the best of their potential is still extremely rare in West Germany. Professional women are often reserved, if not defensive, in their interactions with their male peers because the society and the world of men are not ready to accept the professional equality.



### Conclusion

The German man of today thinks in principle as his father and grandfather did. In his mind, not very much has basically changed in regard to women. "Women are not quite equal, but are creatures somewhere between man and child." (6) Although there always will be exceptions to these findings results essentially represent the realities of male/female relationships in West Germany. Communication patterns between West German men and women reflect the supremacy notion of one over the other. Male/female communications are usually downward, but rarely horizontal, on an equal basis. Content and channels of communication are generally selected and controlled by men. Overall, male/female communications in West Germany are a far cry from being open and conducive to personal and professional growth of either person in the partnership.



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#### AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN: PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATING A CULTURAL/SEXUAL IDENTITY

*by Clara Sue Kidwell*

In an article published in 1901, Joseph Gilfillan, Episcopalian missionary in Minnesota, described the Ojibwe Indians: the male was tall and graceful, bounding through the forest unburdened except for his bow and arrow, the female was short, and rotund, plodding along bearing a tremendous burden on her back. Gilfillan attributed the squat, rotund stature of the woman to the fact that generations of Ojibwe women had born such burdens, and in some evolutionary sense seemed to be squashed down by them.(1)

The stereotype of the woman in traditional Indian cultures has generally been that of the patient squaw, trudging silently behind her man. Much of that persists in modern society. She is still often viewed as confined to the role of wife and mother. Indian women do indeed fulfill the traditional child bearing role. In 1970 Indian women had the highest yearly rate (3%) of natural increase of any population subgroup in the United States.(2) The Indian family has more children and a lower income than any other group. The Indian woman's median income in 1970 was \$1,697 per year. For all U.S. women it was \$2,404, all U.S. men \$6,614.(3)

Much of the role of Indian women today is influenced by poverty, which is more a result of her status as an Indian rather than as a woman. But within Indian societies, women's roles are also to a large degree defined on the basis of cultural expectations differing from those of modern American society. In traditional American Indian cultures, which were non-technological and based directly on human labor for production of food and material goods, the roles of men and women were considered to be complementary. Women were keepers of the home, child bearers, and food gatherers, and men were hunters and protectors of the home. Agricultural societies generally tended to be matrilineal

because farming was women's work (except in the Pueblos, where men and women either shared the labor or men farmed exclusively). Where women controlled the major source of food supply, they generally also controlled the inheritance of personal property and owned the family dwelling as well. In hunting and gathering societies, the man's role was generally the most important in terms of public acknowledgement or display of personal qualities of bravery and honor, while women, as keepers of the home, exercised considerable influence in their own domain. Although marriage was arranged by male relatives, once married a woman could exercise a great deal of freedom in her future. Mountain Wolf Woman, a Menominee girl, was told by her mother, who was preparing her for marriage to a man she disliked, that she must do what her brothers wanted her to do or else she would disgrace them. However, her mother added, "When you are older and know better, you can marry whomever you yourself think that you want to marry." (4) And indeed that is what Mountain Wolf Woman did.

The processes of acculturation that have accompanied contact between Indian and non-Indian societies have greatly undermined the integrity of Indian societies. Education and Christianization have already destroyed much of the Indian traditions, but there is a persistence of Indian identity in America that cannot be denied. In the 1970 census 763,594 people identified themselves as American Indians. Of those, 388,210 were female. (5) The Bureau of Indian Affairs currently recognizes 481 Indian tribal entities. (6)

Anthropologists studying the impact of acculturation on American Indians have often concluded that Indian women are affected less than Indian men because the roles of wives and mothers are less challenged than those of men forced to give up their traditional hunter and warrior roles to compete in a wage based economy. (7) Indian women do indeed continue to play important roles in their communities as wives and mothers. Yet because the women's liberation movement in modern American society has generally portrayed those roles as confining and unrewarding, many women desiring to be liberated from those roles also see women who fulfill those roles as being confined and unfulfilled. It is at this point that stereotypes and preconceptions become barriers to cross-cultural communication. If feminists see themselves as the victims of a male-dominated society, they cannot assume that American Indian societies are male dominated in the same way as their own. If they see the roles of wife and mother as unrewarding, they cannot assume that the system of rewards of the Indian community is the same as that of the dominant society.

A former president of the University of Minnesota, delivering his final commencement address to the student body of the University in 1974, stated that the women's



liberation movement had brought about the most sweeping social changes of any movement in America in the last decade. It is obvious that any movement making basic changes in relationships within a society is going to cause basic cultural changes--in patterns of child rearing behavior, in the structure of the family, in the economic patterns of the country. To assume that Indian women need or wish to be liberated from traditional family-based roles is to assume that Indian cultures should be changed to conform to majority expectations. How to communicate that this is not necessarily the case is a problem, especially when confronting an audience of feminists. But perhaps it is too much of an assumption, indeed it is a form of stereotyping, to say that Indian women all share a common sense of identity and values, and that they will all react to the feminist movement as something opposed to Indian values. There is a wide range of variation in Indian cultures and historical experiences of Indian tribes. It is impossible to define a unique Indian identity. and Indian women are individuals within their own tribal groups.

In a questionnaire that I distributed recently, part of a study on the status of Indian women in higher education, I asked the respondents to describe in their own words what they felt was the typical role of a woman in her own tribal culture. Of the 61 female Indian college students who responded, 24 said that the woman was expected to be wife and mother and to take care of the home. Several also commented that the woman was often expected or forced to take a job to help the family financially. Ten felt that men and women were equal, several commenting that each individual was expected to do his or her best. Other responses were varied. Two stated that they came from tribes having a matrilineal tradition where women played very important roles. Five said they acted without reference to tribal culture. Twelve made no response at all or said they didn't know. Survey results indicated a wide latitude in women's knowledge of or definition of women's roles in their tribal culture. Thus, while a woman may strongly identify herself as being Indian, she may not identify with a particular role as an Indian woman. The survey was conducted among Indian students in colleges or universities, certainly a non-typical group of Indian women (if any group of Indian women can be said to be "typical"). But I think the responses do indicate the variability in cultural/sexual identity possible. One common factor among the women who I surveyed is that they are almost all in college with the intention of entering some kind of service profession, i.e., teaching, social work, health, guidance and counseling, and law. A number indicated their career would involve working with Indian people. If the fields of education, counseling and social work have, in the academic world, traditionally been entered by a large number of women, the Indian women do not seem to view them as traditional female options but as areas in which they

can serve Indian people.

A misconception affecting all minority women in professional areas is that the minority woman has an advantage in the job market even over minority men. There is some evidence that a college education may be the key to greater opportunities for Indian women than for white women. According to 1970 census statistics, 7.8 percent of all American women have had four or more years of college, and 16 percent of those are employed in professional or technical positions. (8) However, in terms of overall participation in the labor market, the unemployment rate for Indian women in 1970 (10.2 percent) was twice as high as for all women. Interestingly, though, the unemployment rate for Indian women nationally and in rural areas was lower than the unemployment rate for Indian men, a situation not existing for any other group in the population. (9) Thus college educated Indian woman may indeed have a better chance to enter a profession than a college educated white woman. Generally, Indian women are more likely than Indian men to be employed. However, whether this is a desirable situation is questionable. If these 1970 statistics mean that Indian women are more likely than Indian men to be hired, perhaps the situation is undesirable since women are being forced to leave their homes and enter the job market. The woman must thus assume the traditional role of wife and mother and support the family. Considering the high levels of unemployment overall for Indian men and women, the low family incomes, and the high birth rate, the fact that the women are working is probably not a matter of liberation from a confining role at home but one of sheer necessity.

Communication strategies for Indian women are as varied as the women themselves. Factors involved in a sense of cultural/sexual identity may be language differences, participation in tribal ceremonies (i.e. female puberty rites), residence on a reservation, or they may be identity with one's family and friends and attendance at week-end pow-wows in an urban area. There may be strong pressure to get married. Indeed, according to the 1970 census, Indians do marry earlier and have families earlier than the general population, and their families are generally larger. (10) On the other hand, many Indian women college students do not necessarily identify the role of wife and mother as the traditional woman's role in their tribal culture. They feel free to make career choices for themselves rather than with any reference to a typical Indian woman's role. The most important communication strategy for Indian women is displaying pride in one's identity and performing with skill and competence the functions of one's role, be it wife and mother, lawyer, or teacher.

Indian women within their own communities have their strategies of communication generally associated with the respect for the role of wife and mother. Expectations are strong that the individual will marry, and although attitudes toward marriage

and divorce may differ from those of the majority society in many cases, the extended family (several generations of the family living in close proximity to each other in a reservation community, or even an urban area) still provides continuity in family life. The Indian woman who leaves the family to pursue a professional career or to seek a college degree often does so with the intention of preparing herself in some way to serve Indian communities. Her strategies of communication with the academic or professional community in which she moves may be attempts to inform people about Indian values or traditions that help to break the stereotypes of Indians still persisting in textbooks and the media. The very presence of competent, skilled Indian women in academic and professional settings is thus a strategy in itself.

A group of Indian women who are faculty members in colleges or universities or involved in professional programs was surveyed in connection with my study on the status of Native American women in higher education. Their reasons for seeking advanced degrees were varied, but all in one way or another said, that they intend to help Indian students through college. Several mentioned that they tried to represent the concerns of Indian people to non-Indians. Two definitely felt that part of their impact was, as one said, that she was a role model of a competent and successful Indian woman, and as the other said, she was the only Indian woman that many people said they had ever known.

As varied as their experiences and their present lives are, the identities of the women I have interviewed and surveyed are shaped by the fact that they are Indian. Their studies, their work, and their concerns are in most cases related in some way to Indian students or Indian communities. They communicate a good deal of their identities in their choices of career and their commitments to Indian people.



#### NOTES/REFERENCES

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THE RAVEN  
Northwest American Indian Family Totem



On my way to catch the KLM flight to Amsterdam I stop in the airport news-stand to buy a book for reading in flight and pick up Marilyn French's The Women's Room. On my right is a trim grey-haired woman of about seventy, on her way to visit her children and grandchildren in Frankfurt. On my left is a young mother with a year old baby. In the next row is a girl of eighteen on her way to Israel. All four of us are reading The Women's Room! Which leads to interesting conversation. There cannot be another book this season that is capturing so much attention among women of all ages and stages of life. French's novel is powerful and upsetting. She reminds us that we have not come such "a long way, baby". One remembers that millions of women who followed the Old Religion were burned as witches in order to establish male dominance in religion and medicine. Will there be blood in the streets again? The implications of the articles on sex role and communication in this issue do not offer much to cheer us up either.

Perhaps it is the snow muffled cold of winter that enters the heart with a spasm of dread. Perhaps we need a longer perspective. Let's recall the earliest human memories of the times of the "ancient harmonies" of druids and Earth Goddesses and the records of humane matriarchies from Stonehenge to ancient Crete and the islands of the wine-dark Aegean sea. The great wheel of history is turning. We shall emerge again in healing power, we shall bless and care for the earth and all its living creatures. We shall, together with sensitive men who are open to emotional experience, restore the Yin/Yang balance to life. A male colleague assures me that men's consciousness-raising groups are becoming a national phenomenon, that men are changing too, are challenging stereotyped rigid and demeaning sex roles, that there will be a National Conference of Men's Gatherings to form an organization that will be the male equivalent of NOW.

Under these deep drifts of snow, the colors of Spring tulips are sleeping, waiting, gathering energy to burst forth.

Courage Sisters.

*Helen Hughes*



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